DC
DARK MOON RISING
BATMAN
& The MONSTER MEN
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MATT
WAGNER
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SURVEILLANCE REPORT
VERSION A
VERSION C
It's not even an hour into my shift when Grogan calls me into his office.
The case files that I had thought I locked away are spread across his desk.
I'M ONLY ASKING YOU ONCE, GORDON...HOW DO YOU CONTACT HIM?
PROJECT "R"

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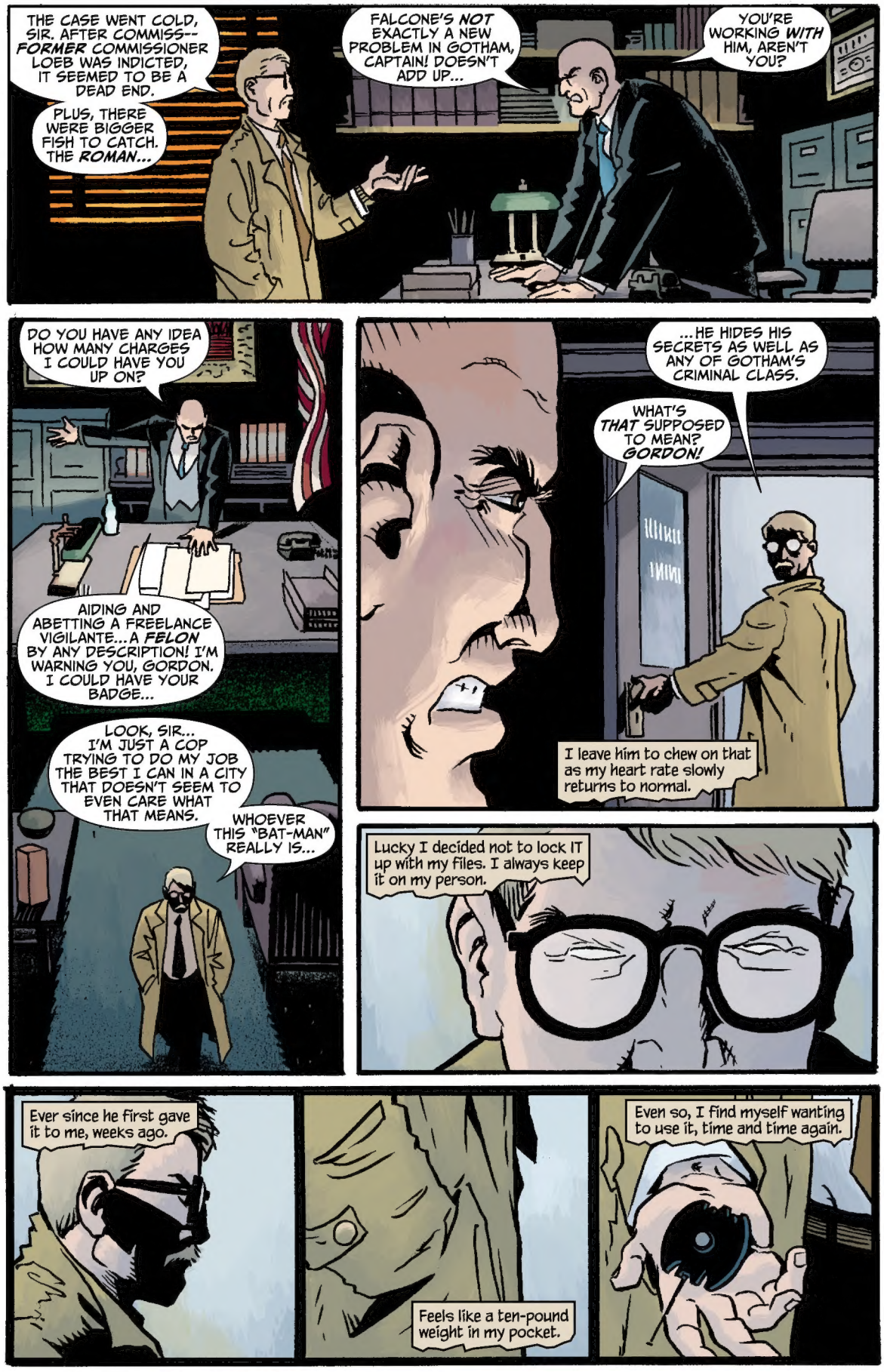
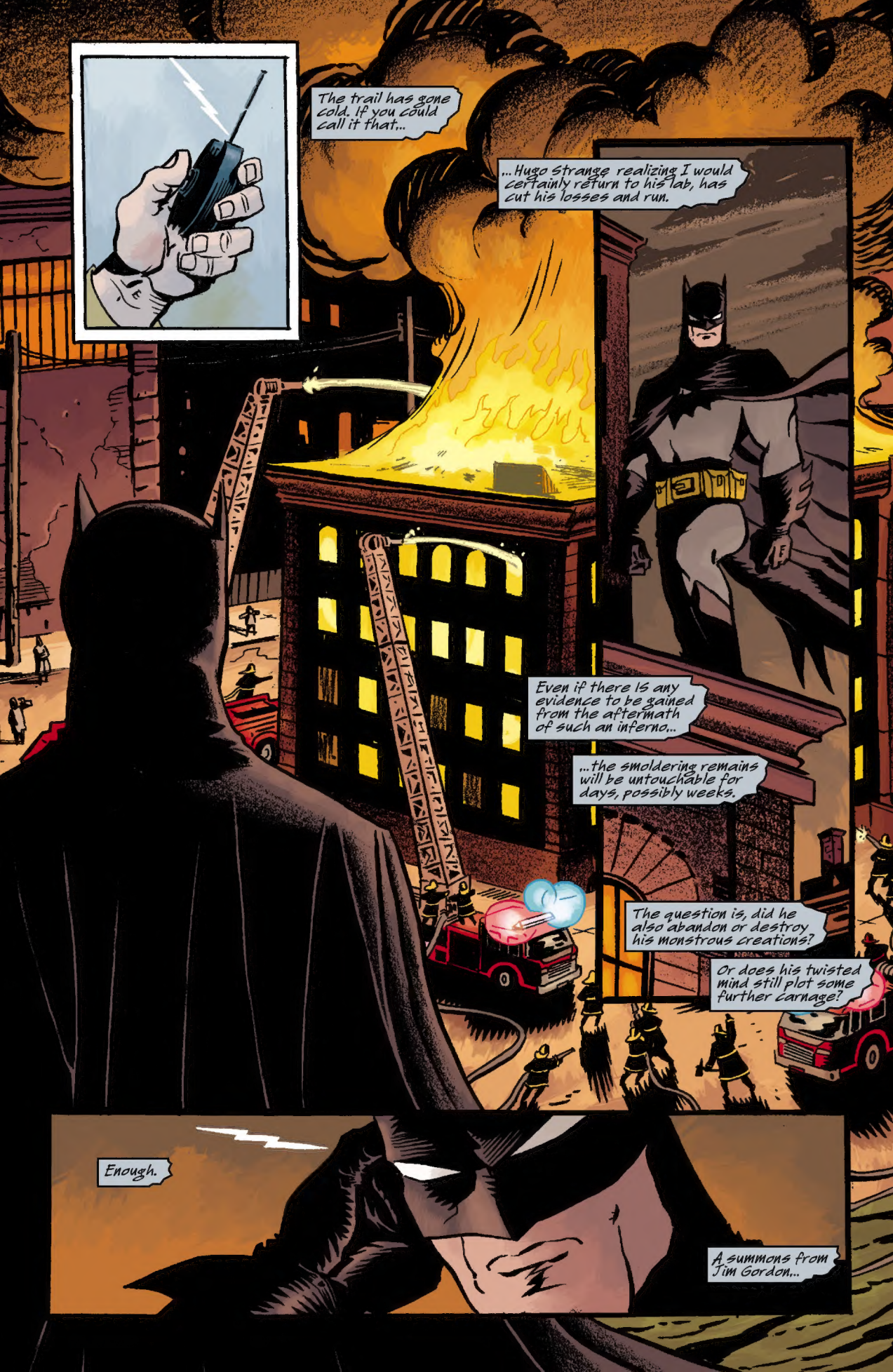
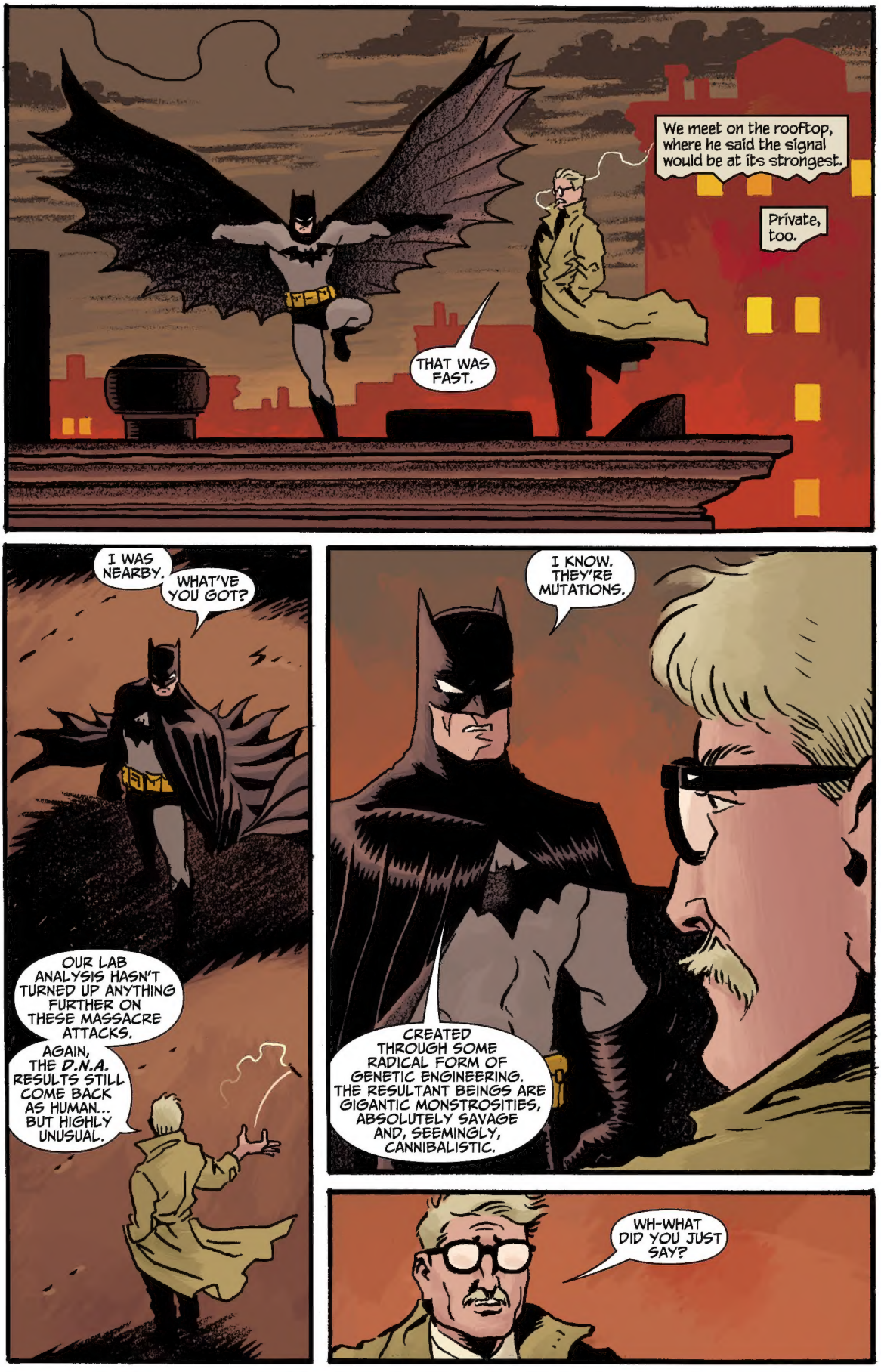
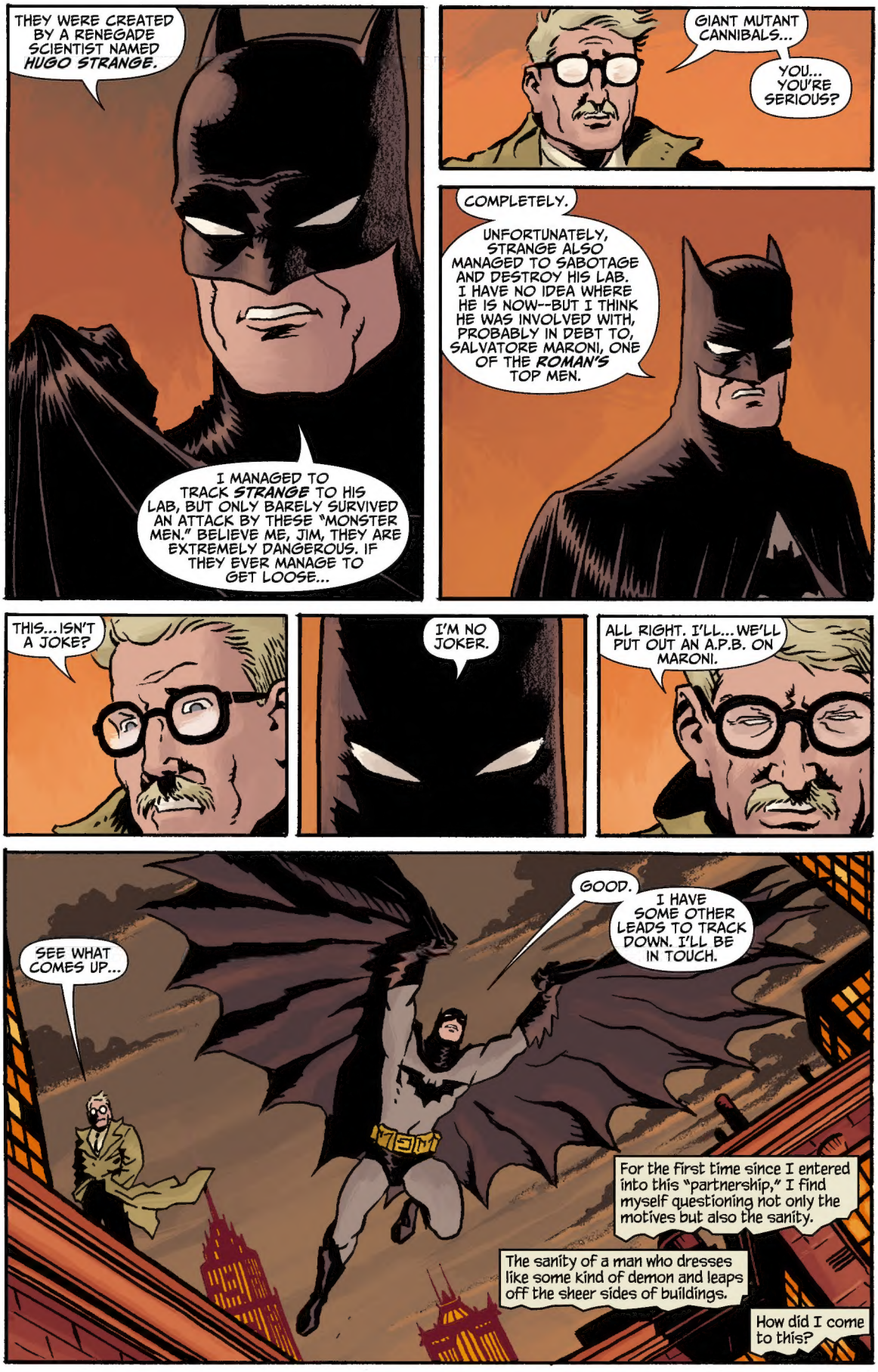
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

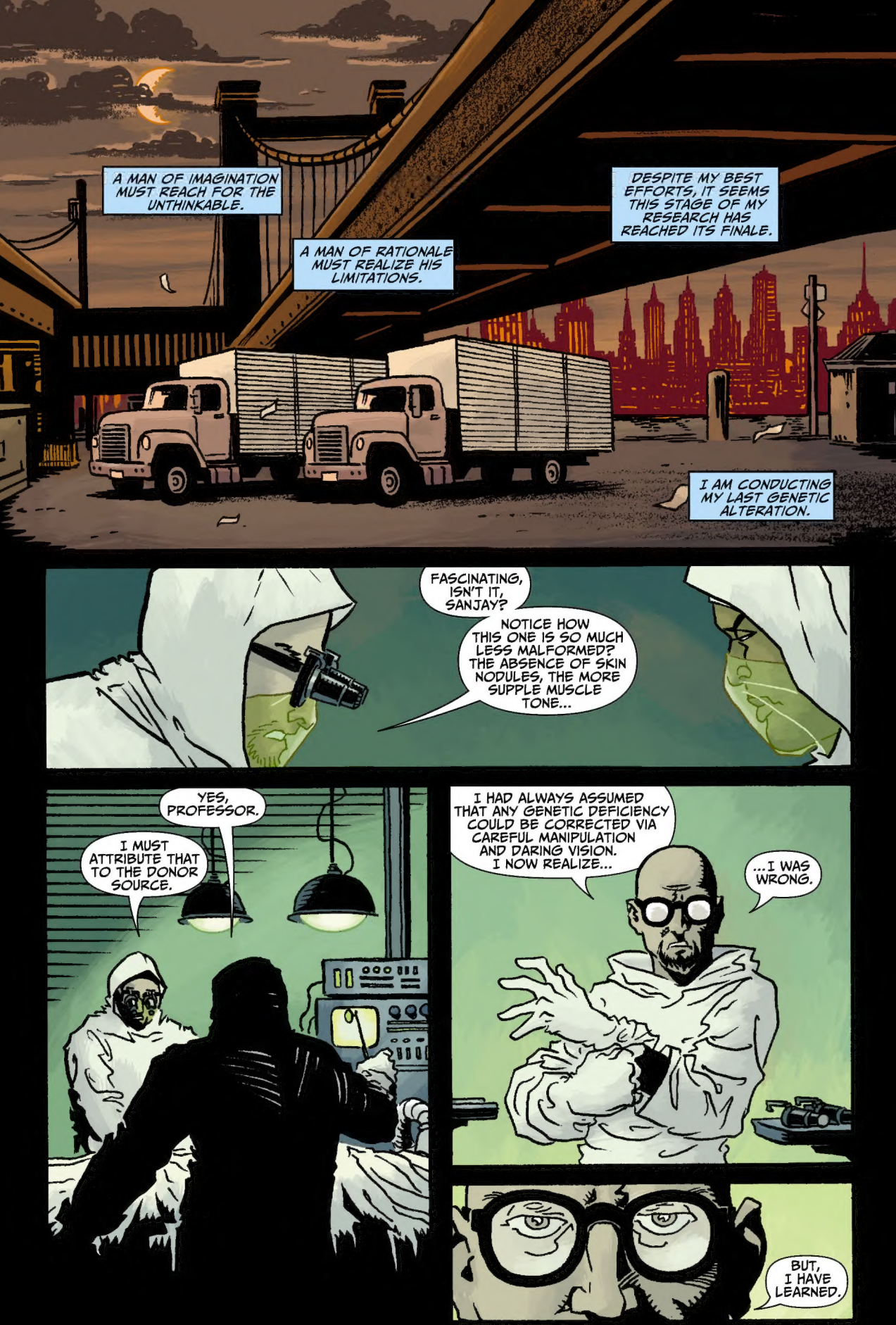
I play it as dumb as any stoolie in the hot seat.
CONTACT HIM... YOU MEAN THE BAT-MAN?
I'M AFRAID I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, SIR.
I DON'T...
Edward Grogan. Appointed by the mayor to succeed Joseph Loeb as police commissioner.
DON'T HAND ME THAT DRECK.
I'VE HEARD THE RUMORS, ALL OVER THE DEPARTMENT...
GORDON'S GOT A "FRIEND." ONE WHO ONLY COMES OUT AT NIGHT.
THESE ARE YOUR FILES! FOR OVER EIGHT MONTHS OF LAST YEAR...
Like replacing a hyena with a jackal.
...YOU SPENT SERIOUS TIME AND EFFORT TRYING TO FIND THIS NUT-CASE. AND THEN, SUDDENLY, NOTHING.
WHY'D YOU DROP IT?

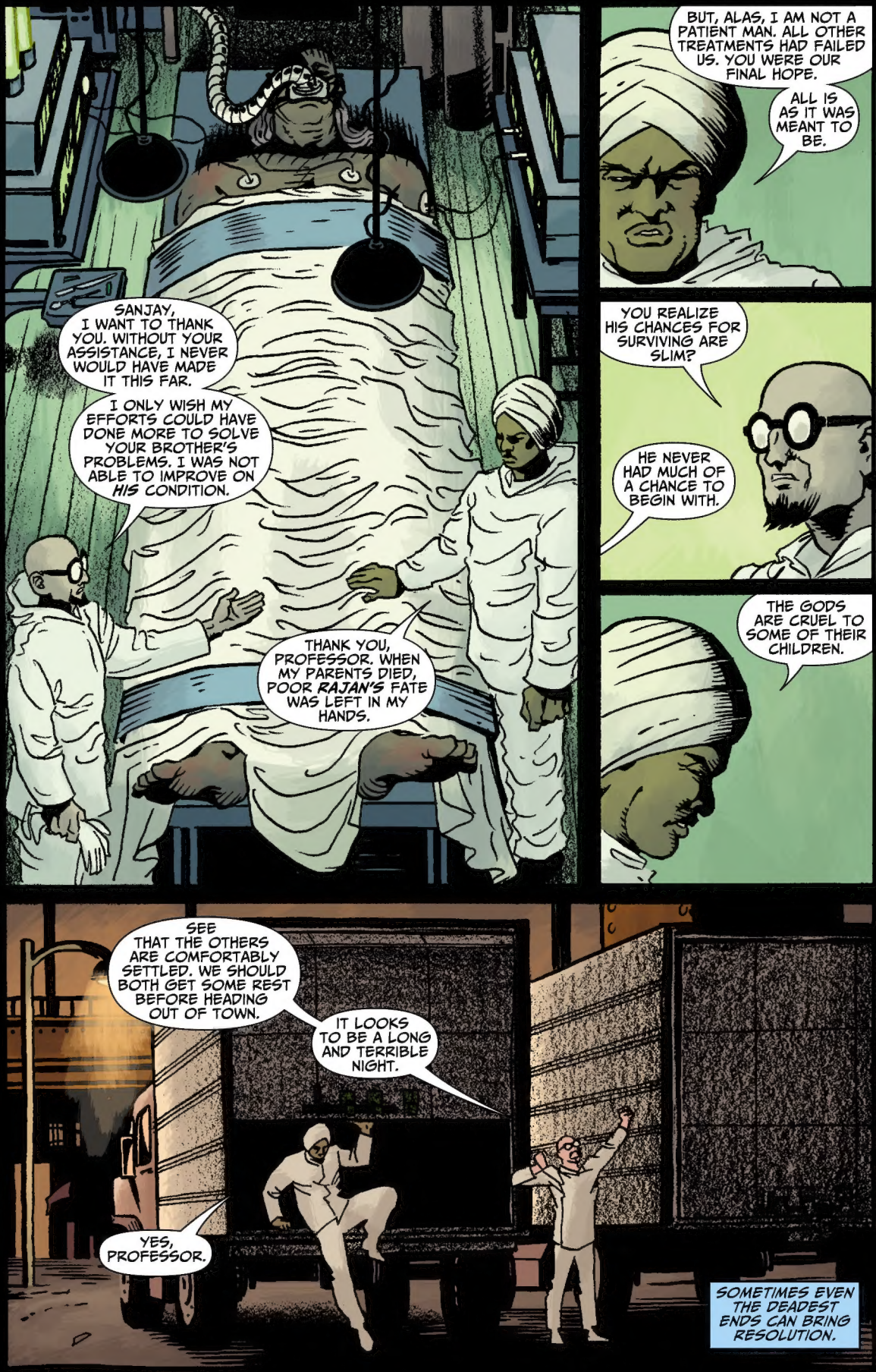

THE CASE WENT COLD, SIR. AFTER COMMISS-- FORMER COMMISSIONER LOEB WAS INDICTED, IT SEEMED TO BE A DEAD END.
PLUS, THERE WERE BIGGER FISH TO CATCH. THE ROMAN...
FALCONE'S NOT EXACTLY A NEW PROBLEM IN GOTHAM, CAPTAIN! DOESN'T ADD UP...
YOU'RE WORKING WITH HIM, AREN'T YOU?
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY CHARGES I COULD HAVE YOU UP ON?
AIDING AND ABETTING A FREELANCE VIGILANTE... A FELON BY ANY DESCRIPTION! I'M WARNING YOU, GORDON. I COULD HAVE YOUR BADGE...
LOOK, SIR... I'M JUST A COP TRYING TO DO MY JOB THE BEST I CAN IN A CITY THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO EVEN CARE WHAT THAT MEANS.
WHOEVER THIS "BAT-MAN" REALLY IS...
...HE HIDES HIS SECRETS AS WELL AS ANY OF GOTHAM'S CRIMINAL CLASS.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? GORDON!
I leave him to chew on that as my heart rate slowly returns to normal.
Lucky I decided not to lock IT up with my files. I always keep it on my person.
Ever since he first gave it to me, weeks ago.
Feels like a ten-pound weight in my pocket.
Even so, I find myself wanting to use it, time and time again.

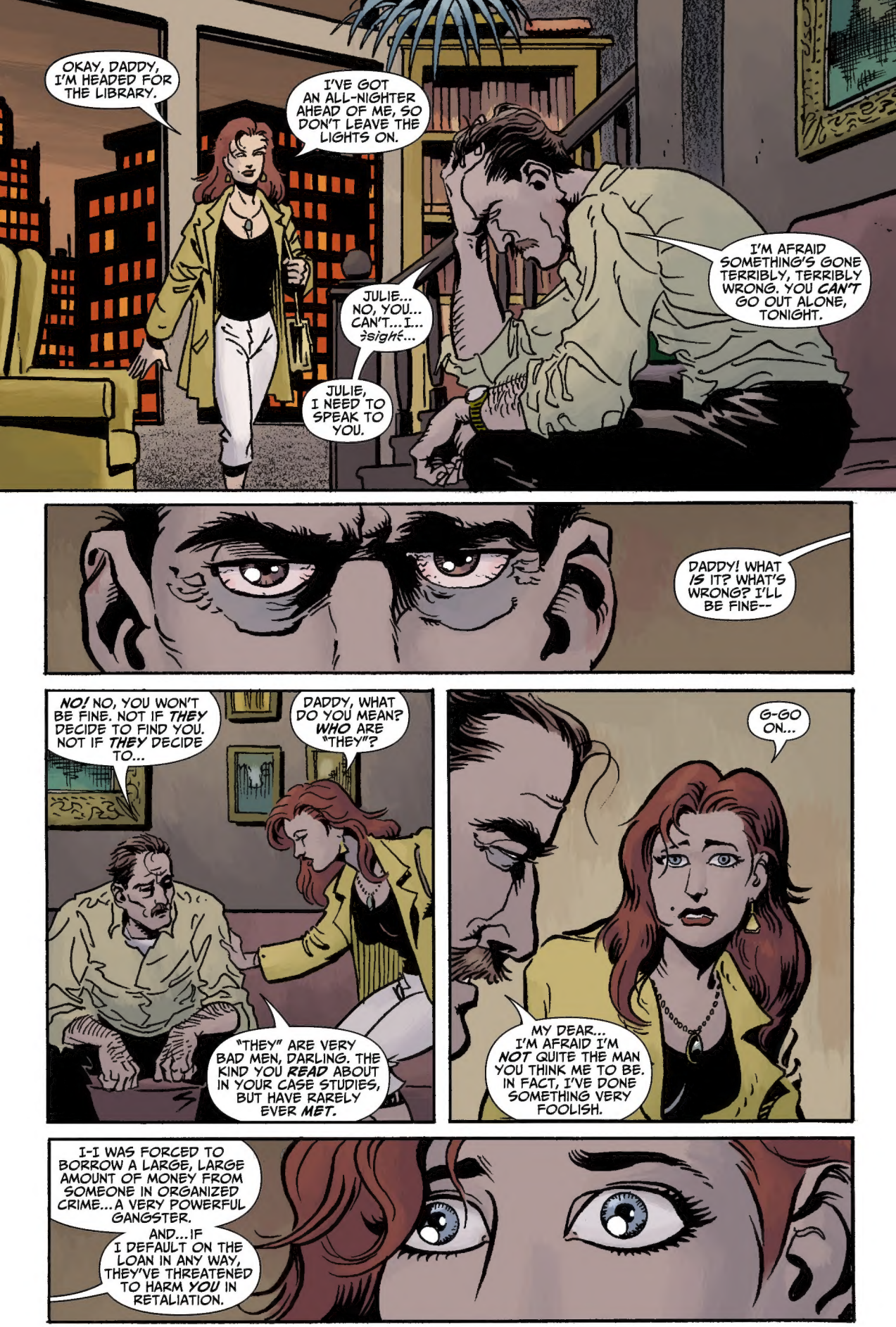

The trail has gone cold. If you could call it that...
...Hugo Strange realizing I would certainly return to his lab, has cut his losses and run.
Even if there IS any evidence to be gained from the aftermath of such an inferno...
...the smoldering remains will be untouchable for days, possibly weeks.
The question is, did he also abandon or destroy his monstrous creations?
Or does his twisted mind still plot some further carnage?
Enough.
A summons from Jim Gordon...


We meet on the rooftop, where he said the signal would be at its strongest.
Private, too.
THAT WAS FAST.
I WAS NEARBY.
WHAT'VE YOU GOT?
OUR LAB ANALYSIS HASN'T TURNED UP ANYTHING FURTHER ON THESE MASSACRE ATTACKS.
AGAIN, THE D.N.A. RESULTS STILL COME BACK AS HUMAN... BUT HIGHLY UNUSUAL.
I KNOW. THEY'RE MUTATIONS.
CREATED THROUGH SOME RADICAL FORM OF GENETIC ENGINEERING. THE RESULTANT BEINGS ARE GIGANTIC MONSTROSITIES, ABSOLUTELY SAVAGE AND, SEEMINGLY, CANNIBALISTIC.
WH-WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?


THEY WERE CREATED BY A RENEGADE SCIENTIST NAMED HUGO STRANGE.
I MANAGED TO TRACK STRANGE TO HIS LAB, BUT ONLY BARELY SURVIVED AN ATTACK BY THESE "MONSTER MEN." BELIEVE ME, JIM, THEY ARE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. IF THEY EVER MANAGE TO GET LOOSE...
GIANT MUTANT CANNIBALS...
YOU... YOU'RE SERIOUS?
COMPLETELY.
UNFORTUNATELY, STRANGE ALSO MANAGED TO SABOTAGE AND DESTROY HIS LAB. I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE HE IS NOW--BUT I THINK HE WAS INVOLVED WITH, PROBABLY IN DEBT TO, SALVATORE MARONI, ONE OF THE ROMAN'S TOP MEN.
THIS... ISN'T A JOKE?
I'M NO JOKER.
ALL RIGHT. I'LL... WE'LL PUT OUT AN A.P.B. ON MARONI.
SEE WHAT COMES UP...
GOOD. I HAVE SOME OTHER LEADS TO TRACK DOWN. I'LL BE IN TOUCH.
For the first time since I entered into this "partnership," I find myself questioning not only the motives but also the sanity.
The sanity of a man who dresses like some kind of demon and leaps off the sheer sides of buildings.
How did I come to this?

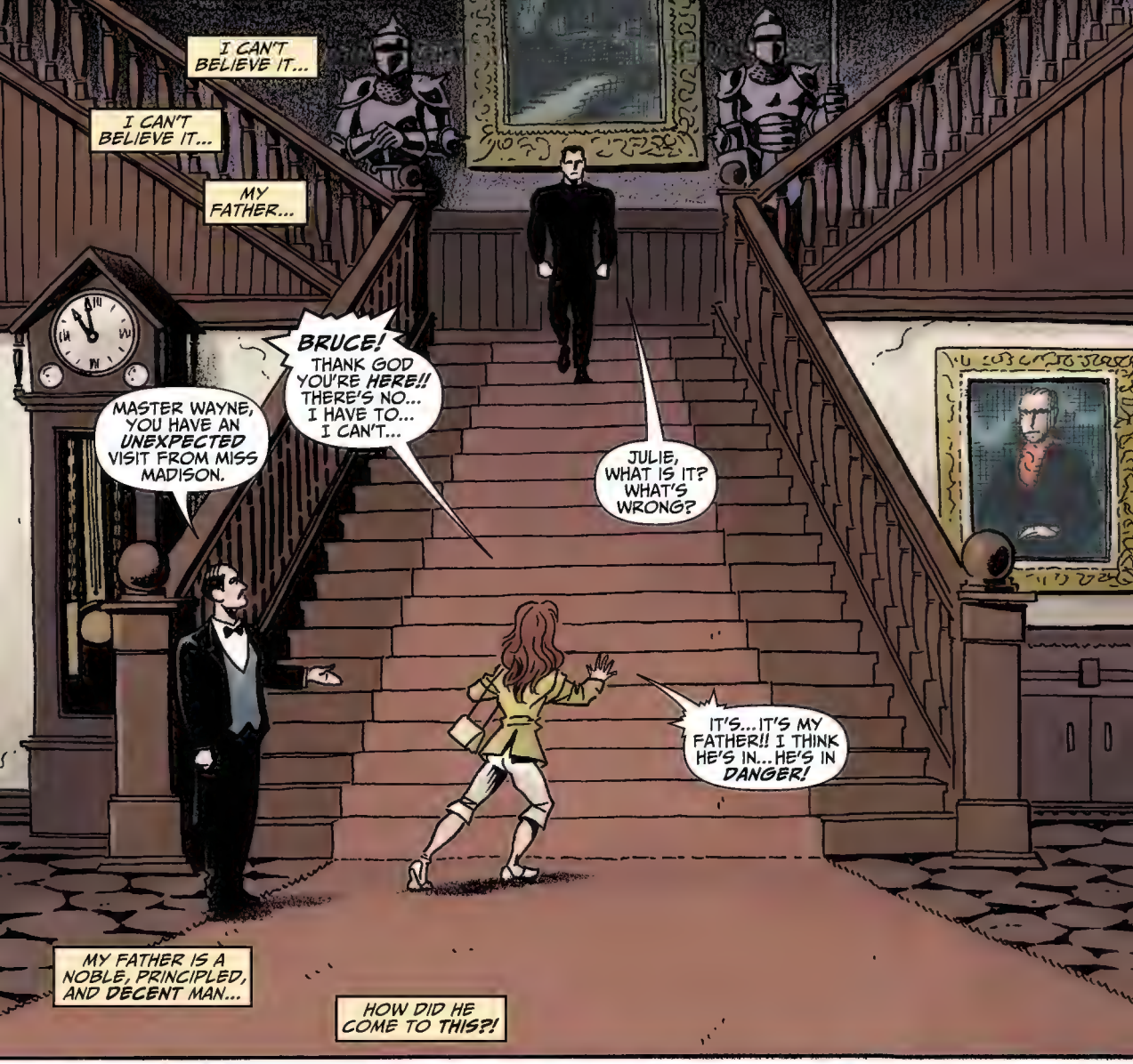

A MAN OF IMAGINATION MUST REACH FOR THE UNTHINKABLE.
A MAN OF RATIONALE MUST REALIZE HIS LIMITATIONS.
DESPITE MY BEST EFFORTS, IT SEEMS THIS STAGE OF MY RESEARCH HAS REACHED ITS FINALE.
I AM CONDUCTING MY LAST GENETIC ALTERATION.
FASCINATING, ISN'T IT, SANJAY?
NOTICE HOW THIS ONE IS SO MUCH LESS MALFORMED? THE ABSENCE OF SKIN NODULES, THE MORE SUPPLE MUSCLE TONE...
YES, PROFESSOR.
I MUST ATTRIBUTE THAT TO THE DONOR SOURCE.
I HAD ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT ANY GENETIC DEFICIENCY COULD BE CORRECTED VIA CAREFUL MANIPULATION AND DARING VISION. I NOW REALIZE...
...I WAS WRONG.
BUT, I HAVE LEARNED.

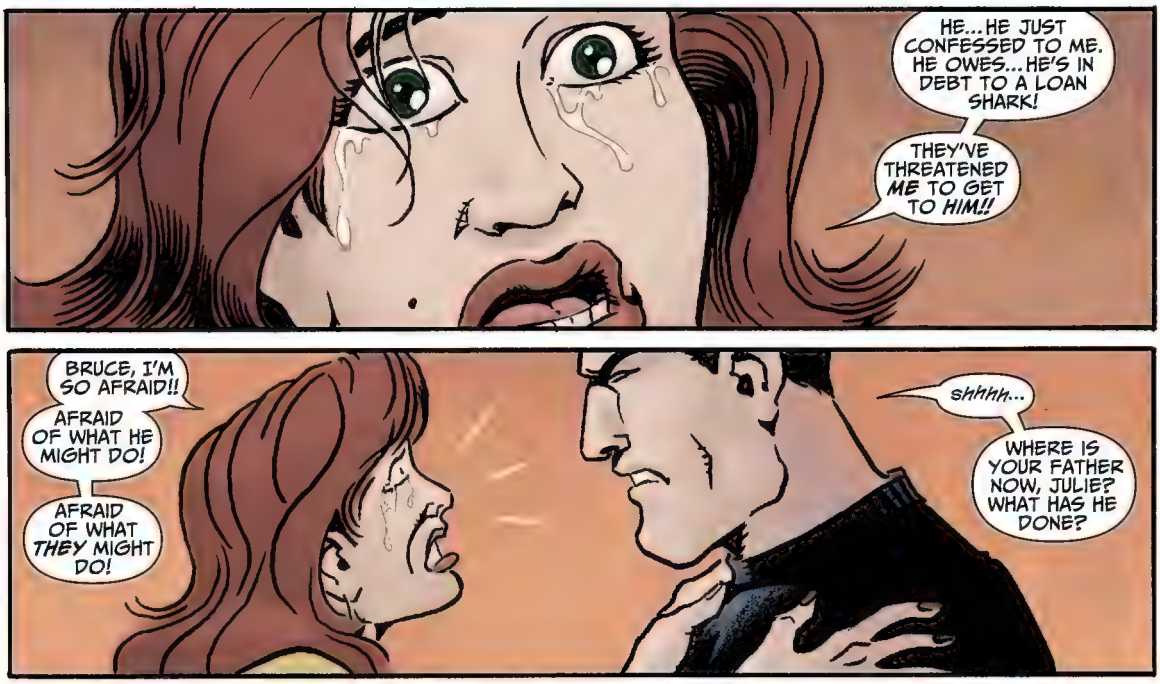

SANJAY, I WANT TO THANK YOU. WITHOUT YOUR ASSISTANCE, I NEVER WOULD HAVE MADE IT THIS FAR.
I ONLY WISH MY EFFORTS COULD HAVE DONE MORE TO SOLVE YOUR BROTHER'S PROBLEMS. I WAS NOT ABLE TO IMPROVE ON *HIS* CONDITION.
THANK YOU, PROFESSOR. WHEN MY PARENTS DIED, POOR *RAJAN'S* FATE WAS LEFT IN MY HANDS.
BUT, ALAS, I AM NOT A PATIENT MAN. ALL OTHER TREATMENTS HAD FAILED US. YOU WERE OUR FINAL HOPE.
ALL IS AS IT WAS MEANT TO BE.
YOU REALIZE HIS CHANCES FOR SURVIVING ARE SLIM?
HE NEVER HAD MUCH OF A CHANCE TO BEGIN WITH.
THE GODS ARE CRUEL TO SOME OF THEIR CHILDREN.
SEE THAT THE OTHERS ARE COMFORTABLY SETTLED. WE SHOULD BOTH GET SOME REST BEFORE HEADING OUT OF TOWN.
IT LOOKS TO BE A LONG AND TERRIBLE NIGHT.
YES, PROFESSOR.
SOMETIMES EVEN THE DEADEST ENDS CAN BRING RESOLUTION.


OKAY, DADDY, I'M HEADED FOR THE LIBRARY.
I'VE GOT AN ALL-NIGHTER AHEAD OF ME, SO DON'T LEAVE THE LIGHTS ON.
JULIE... NO, YOU... CAN'T... I... *sigh*...
JULIE, I NEED TO SPEAK TO YOU.
I'M AFRAID SOMETHING'S GONE TERRIBLY, TERRIBLY WRONG. YOU *CAN'T* GO OUT ALONE, TONIGHT.
DADDY! WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT'S WRONG? I'LL BE FINE--
NO! NO, YOU WON'T BE FINE. NOT IF *THEY* DECIDE TO FIND YOU. NOT IF *THEY* DECIDE TO...
DADDY, WHAT DO YOU MEAN? *WHO* ARE "THEY"?
"THEY" ARE VERY BAD MEN, DARLING. THE KIND YOU *READ* ABOUT IN YOUR CASE STUDIES, BUT HAVE RARELY EVER *MET*.
G-GO ON...
MY DEAR... I'M AFRAID I'M *NOT* QUITE THE MAN YOU THINK ME TO BE. IN FACT, I'VE DONE SOMETHING VERY FOOLISH.
I-I WAS FORCED TO BORROW A LARGE, LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY FROM SOMEONE IN ORGANIZED CRIME... A VERY POWERFUL GANGSTER.
AND... IF I DEFAULT ON THE LOAN IN ANY WAY, THEY'VE THREATENED TO HARM *YOU* IN RETALIATION.

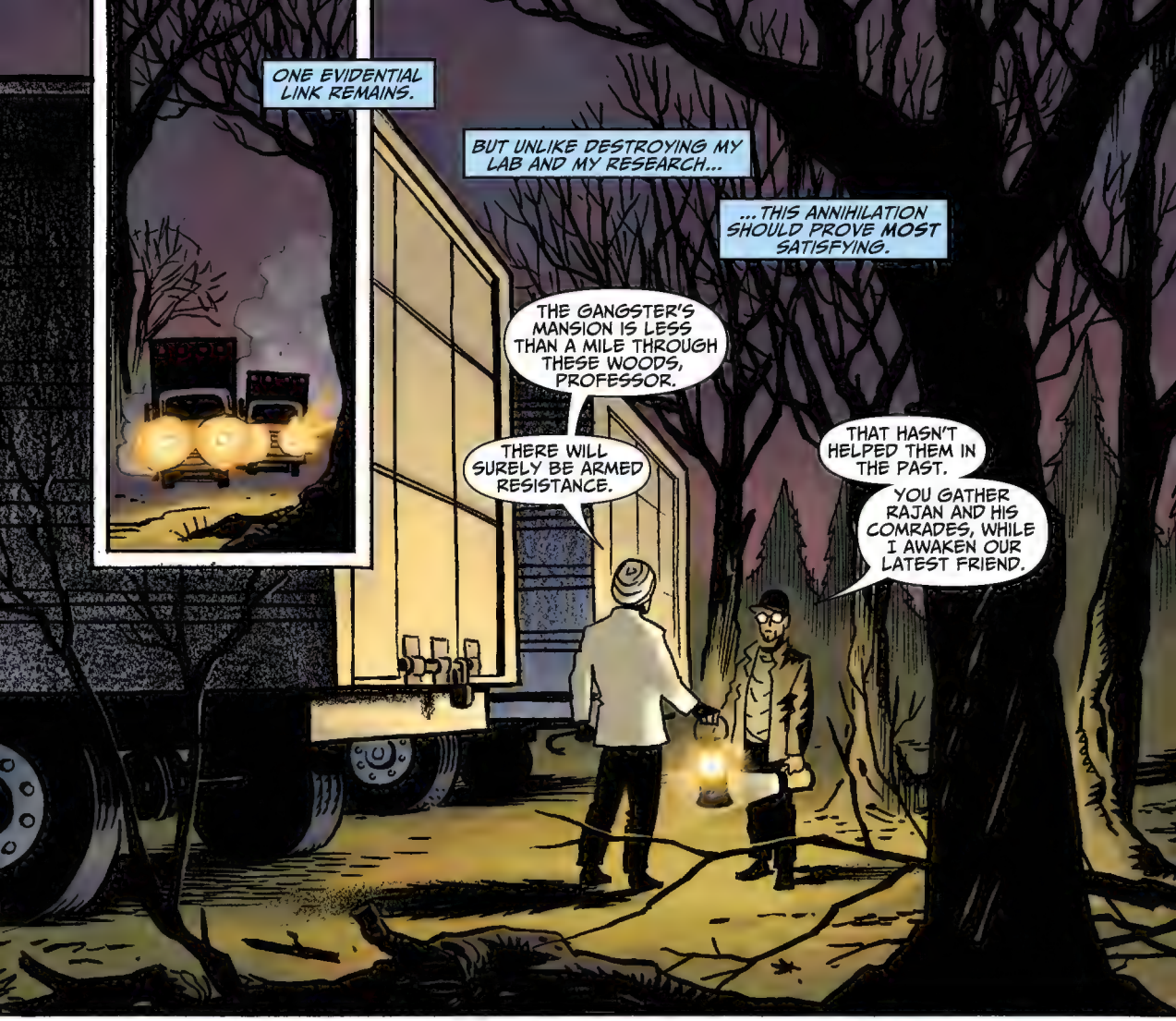
BUT YOU KNOW I'D NEVER DO ANYTHING TO HURT YOU, DON'T YOU?!
DON'T YOU?!
I THOUGHT-- I THOUGHT I WAS IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION, BUT I...
O-OF COURSE, DADDY... I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T.
BUT...BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU BORROW THIS MONEY THROUGH NORMAL CHANNELS? THE BANKS... INVESTORS...?
IF THE BUSINESS WORLD GOT WIND OF THIS, IT'D SPELL THE END FOR MADISON INDUSTRIES.
I'D BE RUINED.
BUT I WON'T LET THEM DO THIS!
YOU'VE GOT TO HIDE! LEAVE THE CITY...
GO SOMEWHERE THEY'D NEVER FIND YOU...I-I DON'T KNOW WHERE...
I-I KNOW WHERE. I'LL GO TO--
shhh... DON'T SAY. IT'S BETTER IF I DON'T KNOW. THAT WAY, THEY CAN'T...
OH, DADDY!
I KNOW, DARLING. I KNOW.
AND DON'T WORRY. I'LL GET THIS STRAIGHTENED OUT AND...AND EVERYTHING...
GOODBYE, DADDY. BE CAREFUL...I'LL BE IN TOUCH... SOON...
EVERYTHING WILL BE...
...WILL BE... FINE.

SAL, WE GOT A PROBLEM.
YEAH, YEAH... WE'RE HERE AT MADISON'S OFFICE. AND, YEAH, HE'S GOT HIS FIRST PAYMENT IN HAND.
OR AT LEAST HE *CLAIMS* HE DOES.
TROUBLE IS, HE *ALSO* CLAIMS HE'LL ONLY DELIVER IT TO YOU-- IN PERSON! SAYS YOU TWO HAVE CERTAIN "ISSUES" TO RESOLVE.
TRUTH BE TOLD, I THINK HE'S THREE-SHEETS-TO-THE-WIND... BUT YOU KNOW WHAT A STUBBORN ASS HE CAN BE...
T...TELL MR. MARONI THAT THISH ISH A... MATTER OF *HONOR.* *buh*...BUHTWEEN GENTLEMEN...
Y'HEAR THAT? OKAY. I'M ON IT.
ALL RIGHT, BUD, Y'GOT YOUR WAY. SAL SAYS HE'LL SEE YOU TONIGHT. BUT *WE* GOTTA DRIVE YOU THERE. AND *YOU* GOTTA WEAR A BLINDFOLD.
I AM NOT--
YOU ARE... IN NO POSITION TO ARGUE. THAT'S THE DEAL, TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.
sigh
VERY WELL...

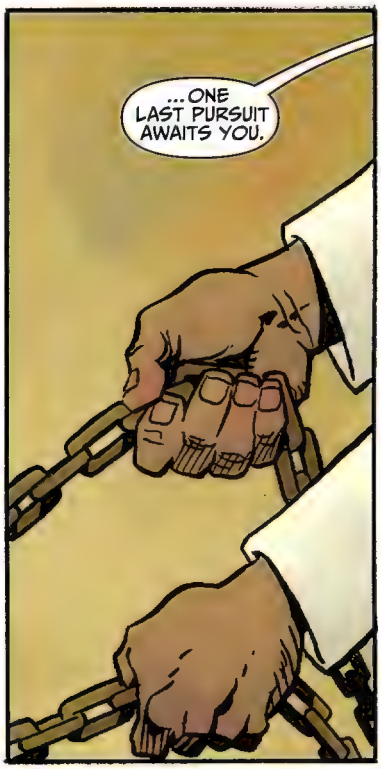

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
MY FATHER...
BRUCE! THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE!! THERE'S NO... I HAVE TO... I CAN'T...
MASTER WAYNE, YOU HAVE AN UNEXPECTED VISIT FROM MISS MADISON.
JULIE, WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S...IT'S MY FATHER!! I THINK HE'S IN...HE'S IN DANGER!
MY FATHER IS A NOBLE, PRINCIPLED, AND DECENT MAN...
HOW DID HE COME TO THIS?!


HE...HE JUST CONFESSED TO ME. HE OWES...HE'S IN DEBT TO A LOAN SHARK!
THEY'VE THREATENED ME TO GET TO HIM!!
BRUCE, I'M SO AFRAID!!
AFRAID OF WHAT HE MIGHT DO!
AFRAID OF WHAT THEY MIGHT DO!
shhhh...
WHERE IS YOUR FATHER NOW, JULIE? WHAT HAS HE DONE?

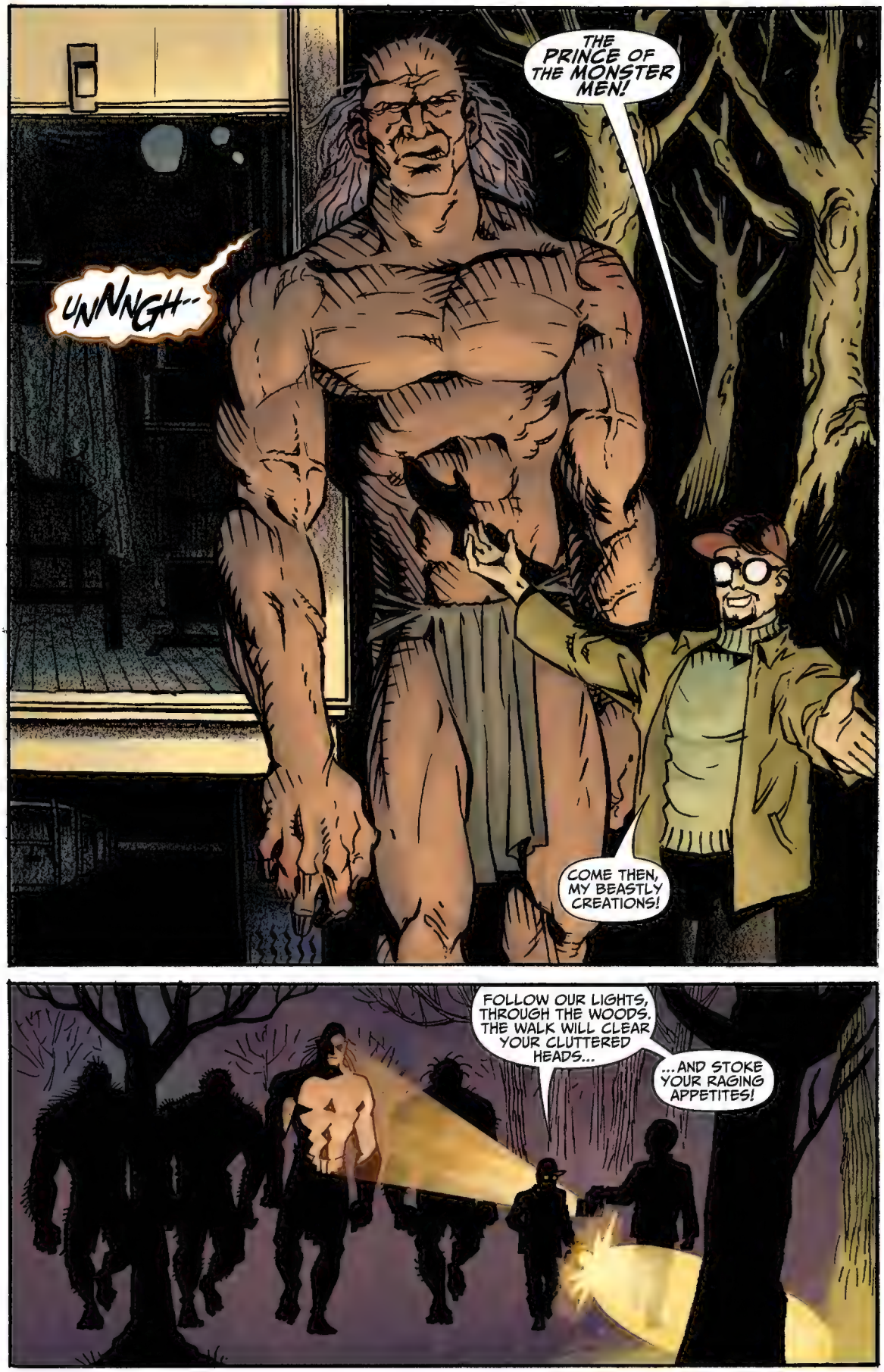
I DON'T... I DON'T KNOW!
HE INSISTED I GO INTO HIDING AND I...I CAME HERE...I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE--
OHHH-- I FEEL SO OUT OF CONTROL! MY HEAD--
YOU'LL BE FINE.
ALFRED, A GLASS OF WATER, PLEASE...
CERTAINLY, SIR.
YOU NEED TO CALM DOWN, JULIE. HERE, DRINK THIS.
YES, I...
OH, BRUCE... WHAT AM I--
I...I... UHHHH--
SHE WAS ON THE VERGE OF A BREAKDOWN. AND, UNFORTUNATELY, THERE'S A SITUATION THAT DEMANDS BATMAN'S ATTENTION.
AND SO, IN KEEPING WITH CONVENTIONAL WISDOM, YOU'VE CHOSEN TO SECRETLY DRUG YOUR GIRLFRIEND.
I HAD NO CHOICE, ALFRED. I'M GOING TO LAY HER OUT IN THE EAST GUEST BEDROOM. SEE THAT SHE'S COMFORTABLE.
YES, SIR.

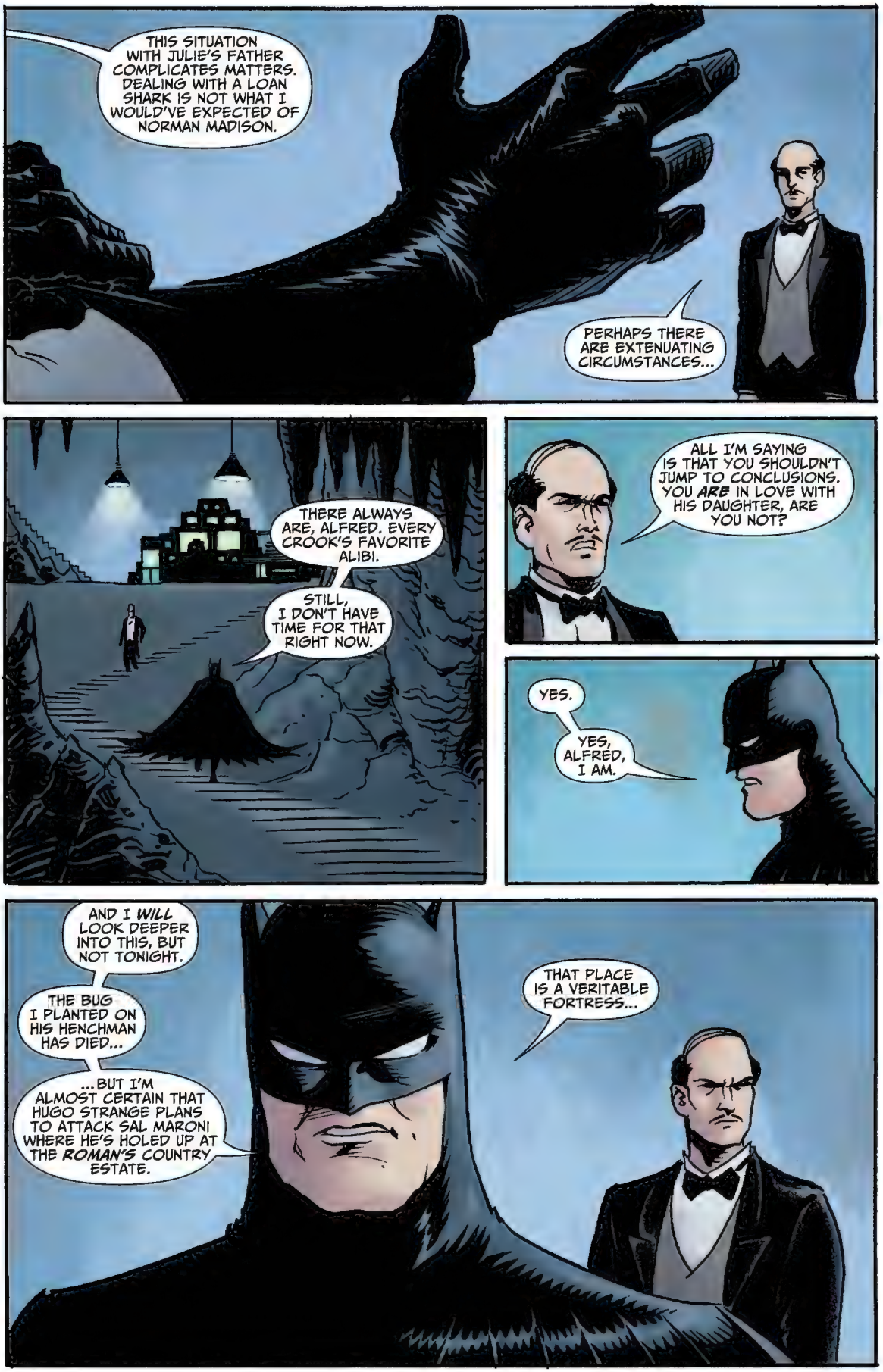

ONE EVIDENTIAL LINK REMAINS.
BUT UNLIKE DESTROYING MY LAB AND MY RESEARCH...
...THIS ANNIHILATION SHOULD PROVE MOST SATISFYING.
THE GANGSTER'S MANSION IS LESS THAN A MILE THROUGH THESE WOODS, PROFESSOR.
THERE WILL SURELY BE ARMED RESISTANCE.
THAT HASN'T HELPED THEM IN THE PAST.
YOU GATHER RAJAN AND HIS COMRADES, WHILE I AWAKEN OUR LATEST FRIEND.

ARISE, OH HUNGRY ONES...


...ONE LAST PURSUIT AWAITS YOU.

COME NOW, SHAKE OFF YOUR SEDATION.
AND RALLY TO A CAUSE *DESERVING* OF YOUR SAVAGE INSTINCTS!
TONIGHT, MY FRIENDS, YOU WILL UNLEASH YOUR TERRIBLE MIGHT AS NEVER BEFORE!
AND THEY WON'T BE *ALONE*, SANJAY. THEIR LATEST BROTHER IS READY TO JOIN THEIR TERRIBLE RANKS!
SAY "HELLO" TO...


UNNNGH--
THE PRINCE OF THE MONSTER MEN!
COME THEN, MY BEASTLY CREATIONS!
FOLLOW OUR LIGHTS, THROUGH THE WOODS. THE WALK WILL CLEAR YOUR CLUTTERED HEADS...
...AND STOKE YOUR RAGING APPETITES!


THIS SITUATION WITH JULIE'S FATHER COMPLICATES MATTERS. DEALING WITH A LOAN SHARK IS NOT WHAT I WOULD'VE EXPECTED OF NORMAN MADISON.
PERHAPS THERE ARE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES...
THERE ALWAYS ARE, ALFRED. EVERY CROOK'S FAVORITE ALIBI.
STILL, I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT RIGHT NOW.
ALL I'M SAYING IS THAT YOU SHOULDN'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS. YOU *ARE* IN LOVE WITH HIS DAUGHTER, ARE YOU NOT?
YES.
YES, ALFRED, I AM.
AND I *WILL* LOOK DEEPER INTO THIS, BUT NOT TONIGHT.
THE BUG I PLANTED ON HIS HENCHMAN HAS DIED...
...BUT I'M ALMOST CERTAIN THAT HUGO STRANGE PLANS TO ATTACK SAL MARONI WHERE HE'S HOLED UP AT THE *ROMAN'S* COUNTRY ESTATE.
THAT PLACE IS A VERITABLE FORTRESS...

...AND I'VE GOT *JUST* THE THING TO STORM IT WITH.

VERY GOOD, SIR. IT'S FINALLY FINISHED, THEN?

YES.

THIS IS SOMETHING I'VE NEEDED SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING OF MY MISSION.

IT'S ALL BUT INDESTRUCTIBLE, OPERATES ON A JET TURBINE ENGINE AND HAS NIGHT-VISION HEAD-LAMPS SO IT CAN RUN IN TOTAL DARKNESS.

MOST IMPRESSIVE, SIR.

I'M ACTUALLY SURPRISED THAT YOU DIDN'T ADD WINGED FINS TO THE REAR FENDERS AND MAKE A TRUE "*BAT*-MOBILE"!

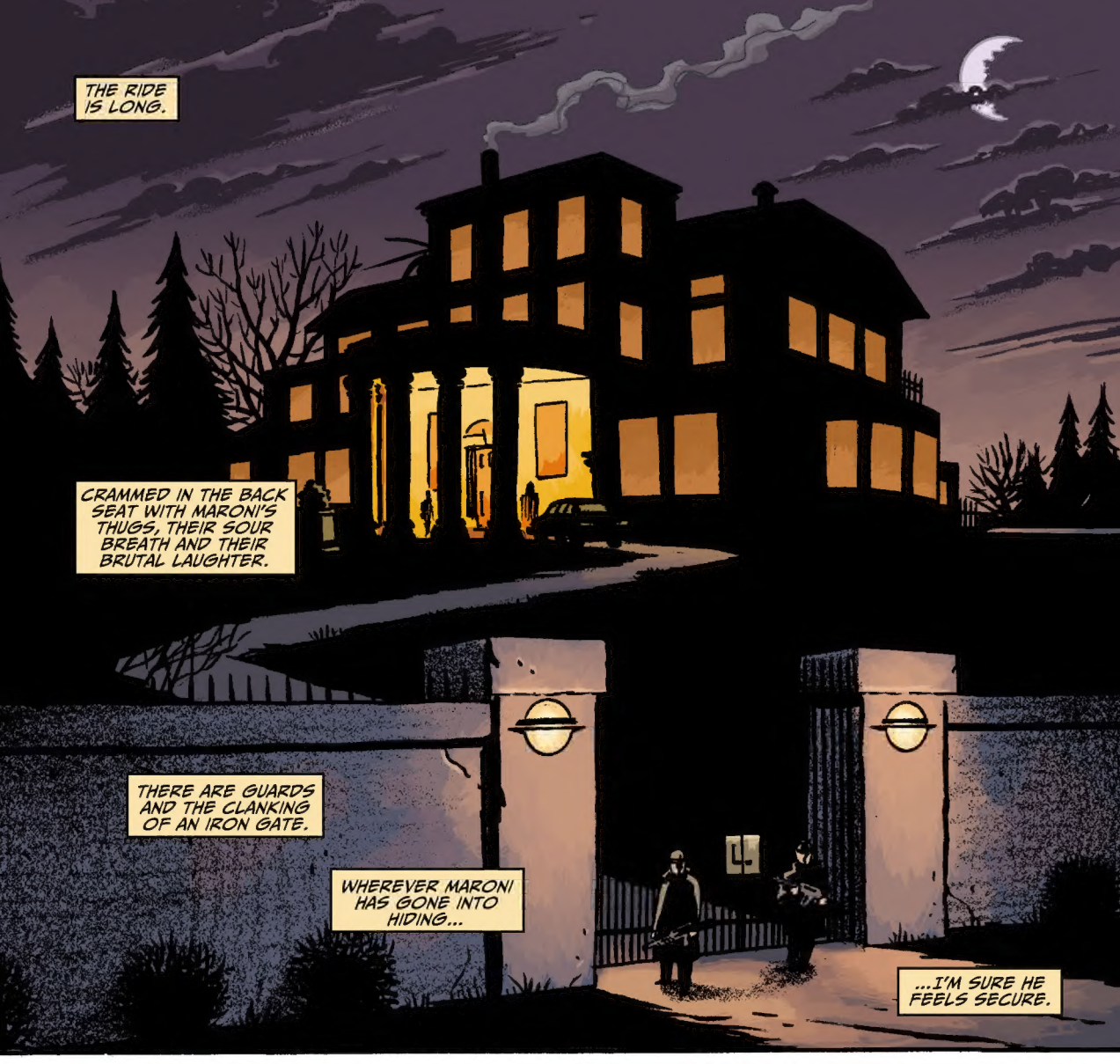
OH, GOOD LORD! YOU'RE ACTUALLY *CONSIDERING* IT!

THIS ISN'T A GAME, ALFRED. JULIE SHOULD SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT. I'LL BE BACK BEFORE SUNRISE.

YES, SIR.

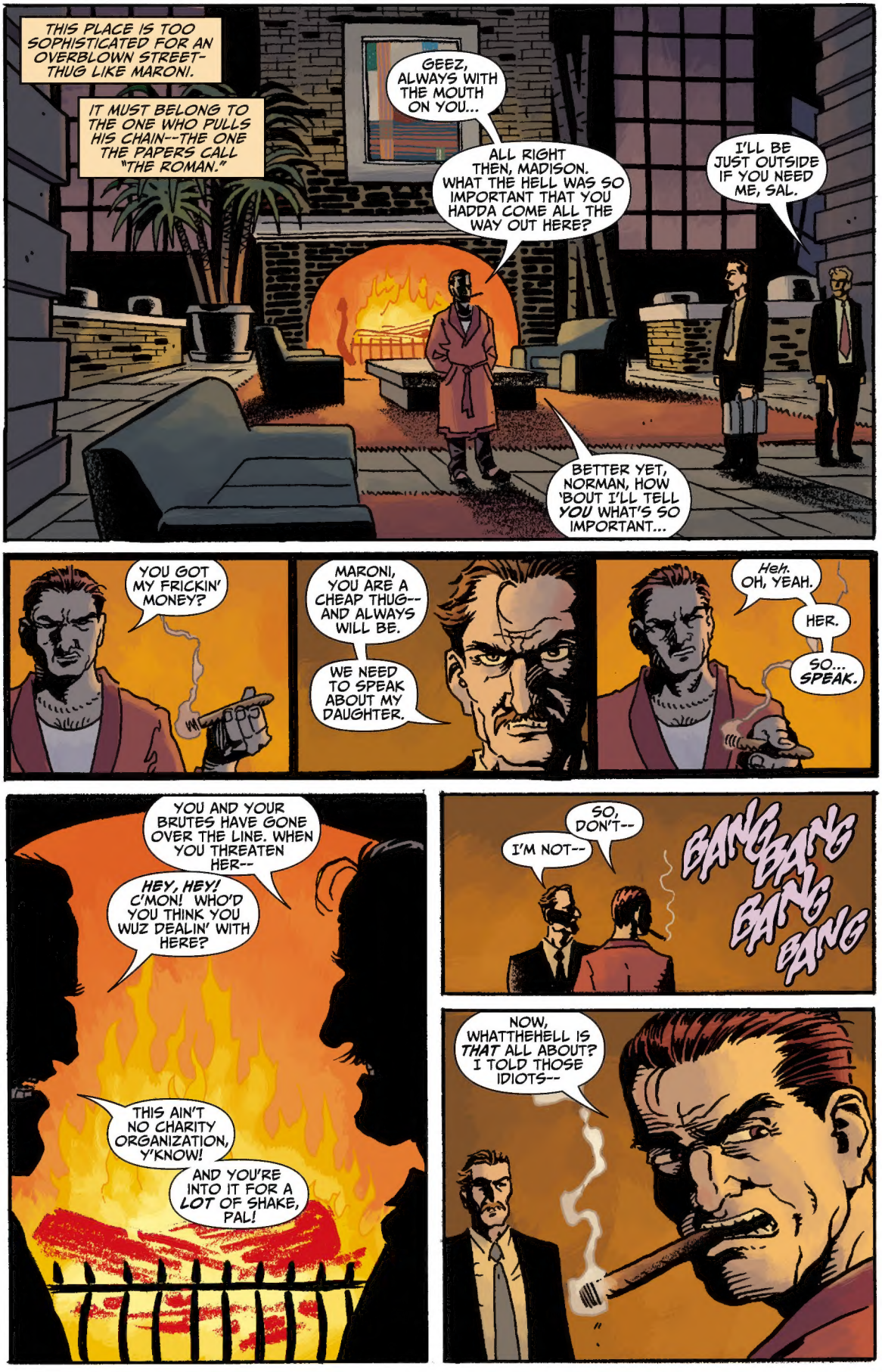
AND GOOD LUCK, SIR.

VRROOOM


THE RIDE IS LONG.
CRAMMED IN THE BACK SEAT WITH MARONI'S THUGS, THEIR SOUR BREATH AND THEIR BRUTAL LAUGHTER.
THERE ARE GUARDS AND THE CLANKING OF AN IRON GATE.
WHEREVER MARONI HAS GONE INTO HIDING...
...I'M SURE HE FEELS SECURE.

CRIMINAL.
WELL, WELL... I MUST SAY WE DON'T GET A LOT OF VISITORS OUT HERE.
TAKE IT OFF HIM.

BUT THEN, THIS AIN'T EXACTLY WHAT YOU'D TERM A "SOCIAL CALL," eh, NORMAN?
I'D... I'D NEVER SOCIALIZE WITH THE LIKES OF YOU ANYWAY, MARONI.


THIS PLACE IS TOO SOPHISTICATED FOR AN OVERBLOWN STREET-THUG LIKE MARONI.
IT MUST BELONG TO THE ONE WHO PULLS HIS CHAIN--THE ONE THE PAPERS CALL "THE ROMAN."
GEEZ, ALWAYS WITH THE MOUTH ON YOU...
ALL RIGHT THEN, MADISON. WHAT THE HELL WAS SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU HADDA COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE?
I'LL BE JUST OUTSIDE IF YOU NEED ME, SAL.
BETTER YET, NORMAN, HOW 'BOUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT...
YOU GOT MY FRICKIN' MONEY?
MARONI, YOU ARE A CHEAP THUG--AND ALWAYS WILL BE.
WE NEED TO SPEAK ABOUT MY DAUGHTER.
Heh. OH, YEAH.
HER.
SO... SPEAK.
YOU AND YOUR BRUTES HAVE GONE OVER THE LINE. WHEN YOU THREATEN HER--
HEY, HEY! C'MON! WHO'D YOU THINK YOU WUZ DEALIN' WITH HERE?
THIS AIN'T NO CHARITY ORGANIZATION, Y'KNOW!
AND YOU'RE INTO IT FOR A LOT OF SHAKE, PAL!
SO, DON'T--
I'M NOT--
BANG BANG BANG BANG
NOW, WHATTHEHELL IS THAT ALL ABOUT? I TOLD THOSE IDIOTS--

SAL, WE GOT TROUBLE! THERE'S A BIG COMMOTION AT THE FRONT GATES...
...LOOKS LIKE SOME KINDA ATTACK... COMIN' FROM OUTTA THE WOODS!
WHAT?!
BUT WHO THE HELL EVEN KNOWS I'M HERE?
MUSTA BEEN A SETUP!
WHICH MEANS IT MUSTA BEEN YOU, Y'DAMN MOLE!
YOU LED THEM OUT HERE! WHATTAYA GOT A BUG IN THAT BRIEFCASE?!
SAY YER PRAYERS, RAT!!
OH, DEAR LORD!! NO!
TO BE CONTINUED